



**City of Bloomington
Environmental Commission**

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES

Thursday, June 20, 2013, 7:00 pm
City Hall – McCloskey Room, 401 North Morton Street

Attending:

Mike Litwin, Linda Thompson (Staff), Dedaimia Whitney, Dianne May, Diane Jung, Jayne Piepenburg (intern), Steven Flowers (intern), Chaim Julian, Sean Gorman

Absent:

Carrie Albright (Chair), Carissa Moncavage (Vice-Chair), Deborah Myerson, Kriste Lindberg

1. Introductions (5 min) (Time mark 7:04 pm)
2. Announcements (8 min) (Time mark 7:06 pm)
 - A. Next Environmental Commission meeting: Thursday, July 18th, 7:00 pm, McCloskey Room
 - B. Next Planning Committee meetings: June 26th, July 11th, 4:00 pm, Planning Dept.
 - C. Next Tree Commission meeting: July 17th, 9:30 am, Bryan Park
 - D. Next BCOS meeting: July 9th, 6:00 pm, McCloskey Room
 - E. Next Co. Environ. Quality & Sus. Com. meeting: July 10th, 5:30 pm, Rm. 100 Showers North
3. Approval of May minutes (5 min) 7:08)
 - A. Whitney moves to approve, May seconds. The motion passes unanimously.
4. Public comment (5 min) (Time mark 7:09 pm)
5. Committee reports & discussions (45 min) (Time mark 7:10 pm)
 - A. Planning Committee & Sr. Environmental Planner (15 min: Chaim, Dianne, Mike, Linda)
5 cases on planning commission agenda, 2 of which we won't discuss
 1. Patterson Park
 - i. This PUD has already been approved, and the developer is requesting a new PUD approval given changes in their plans. The PUD is broken up into several lots, and the developer is asking for the timing of construction to be changed, and one of the last places they were going to develop is now going to be the first.
 - a. The reason is the existing business which was previously going to stay has decided to move, and so they are tearing down this building and developing this area as well.
 - b. This is a site plan approval, because when the PUD initially went to the Plan Commission, they had a few different street configurations, and there was one way in particular that the Plan Commission liked.
 - c. The proposed PUD change will also change the plat; when the developers first made the proposal, they were planning to build all the way up to the creek, and now there is a riparian buffer and floodplain easement on lots B and C.

Environmental easements have to be held on common property, so now there will be 4 lots.

1. This is now true of all riparian buffers, they are all held in common, as well as Karst conservancies, tree easements, and other environmental easements.
 - ii. The EC memo written for the original PUD approval will be updated. The memo will include green building recommendations, a note of approval for the native plant riparian buffer as well as for daylighting the creek
 - a. Gormon asks whether the source of the creek the Illinois central spring.
 1. Thompson responds that she is not sure of the origin of the creek.
 2. Litwin adds that it may be the creek that runs alongside the Duke Energy facility.
2. Monon Crossing
 - i. This project is located at the corner of Morton and Patterson near the B-line trail, right across the street from Sweet Grass. The lot is over an acre, so they have to have a stormwater plan.
 - ii. This site was approved as a PUD over a year or so ago, and the developers did nothing at the site. At the time of approval the developers got permission from DNR and the city to do construction in the floodplain.
 - iii. The developers are asking for is an amendment to the original plan. Instead of three separate apartment buildings, they're going to have one building with several apartments, and the number of units will decrease from 16 down to 14.
 - a. With the one building design, residents can actually own their condo and their lot. The units will be marketed as condominiums and not as student rentals.
 - b. The landscape plan will also include a little pocket park.
 - c. Jung wonders if Madison Street is still ending at the site or if it will or go through.
 1. Thompson says that Madison Street is ending, the neighborhood did not want it to go through and it's going to stay that way.
 - iv. The original memo included recommendations for green building, and a reminder for developers to be mindful of the floodplain.
 - a. The only area which the EC can comment on may be about the building, and there is some question about the unusual street trees, which aren't on the approved list for street trees as they are nut bearing; the City Forester has not made a decision yet about the street tree choices.
 1. Julian wonders whether Forester set a precedent by allowing fruit trees at Mother Hubbard's. Thompson expressed her opinion that she did not think this was the case, as few were likely to remember the Mother Hubbard case.
3. Crest at 11th
 - i. The site is on the corner of Walnut and 11th, right across the street is High Point, and behind it, adjacent to College, is the Lofts and another apartment building being built.
 - ii. Right now the site is a law office in a building which used to be a house and was added on to. The plan is to demolish the building that's there and build a new apartment complex geared for student housing.
 - a. There is a little yard with trees, and the developers want to get rid of the yard and build a building across the whole front of the lot. The developers are requesting what looks like too much impervious pavement, and they are asking for the building to be taller than the ordinance allows, so they will need to be a waiver for that.

1. The ECPC suggests reusing the limestone from the existing structure, as well as incorporating room for recycling.
2. Whitney wonders about the parking situation.
 - a. Thompson indicates that there will be 17 parking spaces servicing 37 beds.
3. Litwin asks about the bicycle parking facilities.
 - a. Thompson says she does not know for sure what they have, but they aren't asking for any less than they are required to provide.
- iii. The site plan includes a white membrane roof, and lists the incorporation of windows as a sustainable feature as they produce natural light.
 - a. Julian comments on the odd mix of pervious pavers and concrete mix; Thompson says that this configuration is likely the least expensive means to meeting the impervious surface requirement.
- iv. The memo will include the ECPC recommendations of reusing the limestone from the existing structure, incorporating room for recycling and will express concern on the amount of impervious surface.

B. Natural Landscaping L4L Committee (5 min: Diane)

1. Jung is attending neighborhood association meetings for L4L and to provide information regarding natural landscaping. So far she has attended one meeting, and is hoping to attend meetings for the Green Acres and Prospect Hill neighborhoods.
 - a. At the Propsect Hill meeting, Jung plans to discuss Mason bee habitat, plants that the bees need when they first come out of their nest in the early spring, and how L4L goes along with Mason bee homes.
 - b. Jung is also hoping to discuss Mason bees with Amy Roche of the Community Orchard soon.
 - i. Whitney asks whether the Mason bees will conflict with honey bees.
 - ii. Jung responds that there shouldn't be any conflict.
2. Jung attended Bloomington Commission On Sustainability (BCOS) and Environmental Quality and Sustainability (EQ&S) meetings, and plans to attend the next MCEC meeting to talk about a collaboration on L4L
 - a. According to Jung, the EQ&S seems receptive to L4L but isn't yet sure of the nature of the collaboration.
3. Jung also completed a draft of the Public Service Announcement, and it is about 50 seconds long, WBSB is going to record it.
4. Jung will be on the Green Spot Tour.
5. EmilyKasnak has offered to table the Farmers Market on Saturday. Jung will come in Friday to help sort through the materials. Piepenburg will also table at the market.
6. Jung has completed a draft of a fact sheet about ways to get rid of weeds and poison ivy without using toxic and chemical sprays for Thompson to review.
7. Jung has identified several grants to apply for, one of which is due July 1st, and is looking for people to approach for funding as L4L is already running out of signs. Jung asks anyone who would like to join efforts on grant writing and funding issues to let her know and a group could have a meeting to talk about all the options, some of which are tied to some sort of project that we would then be committed to such as the Archer Grant.
 - a. Thompson cautions about writing grants with too many commitments as she would be responsible for managing the grants.
 - b. Jung is looking into sponsorship from Bloomingfoods, in addition to her article for Bloomingfoods.
8. Jung announces that she had her picture in the Herald Times for a mason bee article. She explains that you can buy mason bee eggs online, and that 250 mason bees can amount to the same amount of pollinating as approximately 20,000 honey bees, but that they only live 6-8 weeks.

9. Jung met someone that had moved to Bloomington from Greenwood mentioned who wondered where could they take their brush clippings, and indicated that in Greenwood, the city would pick up the bows curbside and mulch them for public use.
 - a. Thompson says that in Bloomington you can take your bows to Good Earth.
 - b. Jung also heard from a landscaper that because mulch is so now popular, they are cutting down trees to produce mulch.
10. Jung has planted Jaguar grass in an effort to research grasses that provide a lush look without needing the chemical treatments. So far the Jaguar grass is producing that lush look.

C. BEQI Committee (5 min: Carissa, Carrie, Jayne)

1. Piepenburg has updated the statistics and figures in the waste section.
2. Piepenburg indicates that all of the BEQI sections have been updated relatively recently except for Energy, and that she would meet with Jacqui Bauer to discuss overlap between BCOS's STAR report and the BEQI report before she begins work updating this section.
3. Once the Energy section is update, the whole report may be ready for presentation to the Mayor.

D. Tree Commission report (10 min: Dedaimia)

1. No new business, the Vectron tree issue requires further discussion.
2. Thompson thinks the EC should think about a letter or a policy statement, and she has was found some policies for other cities.
 - a. One city had a 1-1 replacement requirement; another had a table that would have a different replacement ratio depending on the size of the tree. The Department of the Army has one site with a really strict policy; any tree that's 4 inches or larger DBH (diameter at breast height) has to be replaced at a 2-1 ratio, if the tree is less than 20 inches DBH, it must be replaced at 100%, and if the tree is over 36 inches DBH, the tree must be replaced at over 200%. A strict policy has cost going into the tree fund, for example \$200/inch of DBH, and that number increased with the inches of DBH. If it was a very large tree, it would be \$300 per inch. Because you can't put the tree back where it was, the party removing the tree would give money to the tree fund.
 - b. Whitney asks what kind of enforcement power would follow through on this issue.
 - i. Thompson says this depends on the Attorney. The Vectron representative seemed to indicate that Vectron didn't have the right to remove the City trees. Thompson would like to meet with the Attorney, especially since no one appears to be taking the reins on the issue at this time, and Thompson really wants to get something done before it is too late.
 - c. Julian asks what is the threat level is for the City's street trees.
 - i. Thompson says the threat is really significant.
 - ii. Julian suggests that this issue is something the EC should make the City Council aware of, and that some members of the City Council will be pretty upset about the issue.
 - d. Thompson has already run into some landscape plans that show that if we really removed all trees within a 10 foot radius of a gas line, there would essentially be no street trees. A lot of the gas lines are under the street or the sidewalk, and if it's 10 foot back rule, there is not 10 feet from the street to the tree plot in some cases. So if we were going to really be cooperative with Vectron, it would mean we would say no street trees.
 - i. Julian notes that we also need to make developers aware where the gas lines are.
 - ii. Thompson says that when developers do the utility plans, they don't even put the gas line on the plans because gas is not a city utility. For example, Thompson just went out to inspect the new Rural King and they are supposed to plant all the space between the building and the highway with trees, but there's a high tension line above the area and a gas line running right under it; these facts weren't on the landscape plan, so whoever approved the landscape plan didn't know and didn't

- put boots on the ground, and so Rural King can't possibly comply with their landscape plan.
- iii. The developers whom Thompon has talked to about the gas line can't be bothered to include them on their plans.
 - iv. Whitney asserts that Thompson has really broadened the issue; when she first heard about this she didn't initially appreciate the global significance. The Tree Commission is concerned about the trees, but the Planning Commission has to be concerned about the issue as well. She urges Thompson to write a policy.
 1. Thompson indicates that if she wrote the policy it would have to go through her boss and through the mayor, but if the EC wrote the policy it can go straight to the Tree Commission.
 2. Whitney says we should draft something, and that she would take it to the tree commission.
 3. Julian says that there are portions for commission reports at City Council Meetings, and thinks we should schedule a commission report with the council about this issue.
 - v. Litwin asks whether the City or the EC has documentation from Vectron about their plans.
 1. Thompson says no, we have no documentation, and that Vectron wouldn't provide it her when she called and inquired. She tried searching online, and found something in the Code of Federal Register which may be the policy that Vectron is referencing, but it didn't seem to be something specific like Vectron's policy at all. She couldn't find anything specific, but she isn't sure if she looked at the right place or if the policy is an internal product from Vectron.
 - vi. Whitney says that the Tree Commission meets the day before the EC, and asks whether the EC can have a special meeting to vote on a possible street tree policy proposal.
 1. The EC will consider the special session and will communicate over email about the issue.

E. Climate Action Plan report (10 min: Deborah, Dedaimia, Carrie, Linda, Steven)

1. Flowers is working on a Climate Action Plan, and so far the scope of the plan looks at what has been done in the past and updating this past work into a larger plan, looking ahead at 3 years or so.
2. So far the committee has created about 40-45 action areas in different policy areas, and plan to have a final plan drafted in the next 6 weeks or so, so it can be presented to the Mayor.
3. A GHG inventory for the City government has already been completed by BCOS, and a community wide inventory could be the next step.

6. Old business (15 min)

(Time mark 8:13 pm)

A. Bug Fest update (10 min: Diane)

1. The event will be 10-4 on Hilltop on Saturday.

B. Taste of Bloomington update (5 min: Carrie)

7. New business (20 min)

(Time mark 8:15 pm)

A. Parks & rec Green Spots tour (10 min: Kriste)

1. The tour will be June 29th, Jung's garden will be on the tour. Thompson reported that Lindberg said she hadn't decided on the spots yet.

B. Schedule for EC guest speakers (10 min: Carrie)

1. Marc Tschida of the Monroe County Public Library is a central point for non-profit organization information and is coming in to the next meetings either to say a few words or he may be on the agenda.
 2. Whitney will obtain the name of the man who works with land trusts.
8. Commissioner announcements (15 min)
- A. Jung wonders whether the time of the meeting to be earlier in the evening.
 1. Thompson indicated that the time is not written in code.
 2. The EC will consider this issue.
 - B. Litwin announces that he attended the Parks Department Environmental Resources Advisory Committee last week, and the Karst Trail had to be put on hold because of government budget restraints, and the committee is still planning to drain sediment out of Lake Griffy and hauling it to Winston Thomas Settling Basin for treatment.
 1. Litwin also attended two Master Plan Steering Committee meetings, and both regarded environmental issues, summary items include creating a green infrastructure plan, reduce solid waste by 5% annually, instituting an energy efficiency program such as a 15-10-5 program, where the City is responsible for a 15% reduction, urban areas must reduce by 10%, and 5% of area houses will be retrofit for energy efficiency. Urban agriculture was also on the agenda. The last element discussed was "Human Condition", which focused on high school graduation rates. Apparently the graduation rate in the 1950s was under 50%. The Parks Department talked about their health and wellness outreach program, and the meeting also included a discussion about mental health.
 - i. Whitney asks whether the report that Steven and his committee is working on is coming up with a table of projects to reduce GHG, as the Climate Action Plan committee is talking about formatting the report in such a fashion, and that this could go to the Master Plan Committee. Litwin will send environmental bullet points to Flowers.
 - C. Piepenburg announces that the Conditions of Agreement database has hit some roadblocks and she will be meeting with someone in ITS to discuss options going forward. Also, Piepenburg will be the Volunteer Coordinator for the City's first Open Streets event, which will take place on September 22nd.
9. Adjournment (Time mark 8:24 pm)
- A. Litwin moves to adjourn. Gorman seconds. The motion passes unanimously.